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The Honorable Mark Takano  
Chairman  
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
420 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Takano:

On behalf of the nearly 3,000 members of the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA), we would like to provide comments to the Committee in opposition to H.R. 3083, *The AIR Acceleration Act*, legislation that would accelerate the timeline on the Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission. If anything, we believe the timeline of the AIR Commission should be slowed down or eliminated entirely.

P.L 115-182, Sec 202(d) of The MISSION Act, established an external Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) Commission to evaluate all Veterans Health Administration facilities with respect to utilization. On final recommendations, the AIR Commission will recommend closure, expansion or replacement of VA facilities. Unlike the Department of Defense BRAC Commission on which it is modeled, Veterans receiving care at a closed facility would not transfer to another VA. Instead, Veterans would automatically be moved into the Veterans Community Care Program (VCCP).

As NOVA has asserted in the past, Veterans are served better at a VHA facility than in outside communities. Data collected by [RAND](#) and [Dartmouth](#) researchers have confirmed that the quality of VA's healthcare in regional markets is as good as, and in many instances superior to that of non-VA facilities. Veterans receive care in an environment where healthcare professionals are better trained to provide the right kind of care for service-connected injuries and illness like TBI, PTSD, spinal cord injuries, toxic exposures, military sexual trauma and suicide.

VA remains the expert in treating these health concerns.

NOVA also would like to remind the Committee that closing a facility and sending Veterans into the fee-for-service private sector is likely to add, not reduce, overall spending. And timely access to care is less likely since VA's Access Standards ensure that VA facilities' wait times are monitored and enforced, but there are no set expectations of timeliness for care of Veterans in the community.

Finally, we would like to point out that Members of Congress will have limited authority to alter the final proposed recommendations. H.R .3083, and in fact any plan to close VHA facilities, must be met with a thorough assessment of the many ramifications – cost, quality and timeliness of care, research, employment opportunities - and an understanding of the vital services that VA Medical Centers provide to our Nation’s Veterans.

Sincerely,



Thelma Roach-Serry, BSN, RN, NE-BC  
President  
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA)

CC: Ranking Member, Dr. Phil Roe

\*NOVA is a professional nursing organization for nurses employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs. NOVA is not part of the VHA, nor is NOVA sanctioned or endorsed by the VHA.